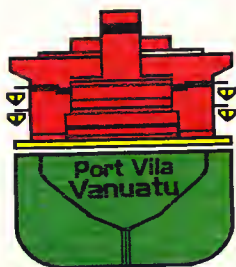


# UPDATE

2/09

APR-JUN 2009

*This Update is intended to keep our friends informed about what is new at VMSL, in Vanuatu and elsewhere.*



Success is to sail with a fair wind and a following sea.



Safety of Navigation, keep her between the buoys!



Maintain  
Your  
PPE &  
Safety  
Equipment



**VANUATU**  
The "STAR" of registries

## EPIRB

RESCUE COORDINATION CENTERS WILL NO LONGER RECEIVE TRANSMISSIONS FROM 121.5 MHZ EPIRBs, ONLY DIGITAL 406 MHZ.

## LRIT

IMO transitional arrangement date for **LRIT is 1 July 2009**. Everyone must submit the information for conformance testing as soon as possible. **DO NOT DELAY!**

## INSPECTION CAMPAIGN

The Paris and Tokyo MOU countries will begin a joint inspection campaign to ensure compliance with SOLAS chapter III from 9 September 2009.

The focus will be on lifesaving appliances and arrangements with regard to lifeboat launching. A list of 20 specific items to verify critical areas for the safety of lifeboat launching arrangements will be used.

## IMO STANDARDS FOR SAFETY INVESTIGATIONS

The Code will require an investigation be conducted for every "very serious marine casualty", defined as a marine casualty involving the total loss of the ship, a death or severe damage to the environment.

The Code also recommends an investigation into other marine casualties and incidents, by flag states. The information collected would be used to help prevent further casualties/incidents.

VMSL Senior Manager, Safety, Quality and Security, Captain Michael DeCharles, has completed a week course at the USA National Transportation Safety Board studying the new IMO Code.

## SAFETY ALERT

Someone has been producing fake copies of Hydrostatic Release Units, the Hammer H20. To an untrained eye, the copy is almost identical to the original product, with Hammer's logo and address on the labels. The fake might look almost like the real thing, but there is one important difference: **the copy does not work!**

The serial number and production date can always be checked by contacting CM Hammer at, [info@cmhammer.com](mailto:info@cmhammer.com)

## USA COAST GUARD

Any vessel either coming to the USA or within 12 miles from shore must ensure all crew members have acceptable identification documents.

## DRILLING RIGS AND MARPOL ANNEX VI

All offshore drilling rigs, support units, accommodation rigs, fixed and floating platforms, and offshore vessels of more than 400 gt fall within the IMO fuel regulations. The sulphur content of the fuel oil used on board should not exceed 4.5%. This will be reduced to 3.5% from January 2012. Working in the North Sea content has to be down to 1.5%.



## **Air Vanuatu Obtains Top Certification.**

Air Vanuatu has been certified as an IATA Operational Safety Audit compliant member. This certification signifies compliance with over 760 operational matters and puts Air Vanuatu on a par for its safety regime with leading airlines in the world. This certification is fairly unusual for a small airline and is a matter of pride to Vanuatu.

## **Vanuatu Joins Offshore Group of Insurance Supervisors**

Vanuatu has been admitted as a full member of the OGIS. Both Vanuatu and Bermuda were admitted at a recent Extra Ordinary General Meeting of the OGIS. Vanuatu has been an observer for the past six years and its acceptance as a full member is in recognition of Vanuatu passing a new Insurance Act in 2005 of international standard, followed by equally high standard Regulations and now a total of five Prudential guidelines. This is another indication of Vanuatu's move to ensure its legislation and standards are at international level for various sectors of the Vanuatu Offshore Financial Centre.

## **IMF ASSESSMENT**

Vanuatu has just completed its bi-annual IMF Assessment. They found that buoyed by strong growth in the tourist and construction sectors (and higher than expected donor in-flows), the GDP grew by approximately 6.6 percent in 2008. Inflation rose from 4.1% in 2007 to 5.8% in 2008. The net result was a government surplus of 2.3% of GDP, mainly as a result of significantly higher VAT collections. The IMF cautioned that the economic slowdown in Australia and New Zealand had not been reflected in Vanuatu statistics, but will be shortly. In spite of this, the GDP is expected to grow 3-4% in 2009, a very creditable performance considering the world economic situation. The IMF recognized Vanuatu's low level of public debt which will give it added flexibility if the recession hits our shores. Generally it was a positive report but did call attention to areas that need improving.

## **VANUATU TO REMAIN A LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY**

The Finance Minister has announced that Vanuatu's status will remain as a Least Developed Country until the next UN assessment in 2012. Owing to Vanuatu's International Financial Centre the average per capita income is distorted on the high side, but with that industry removed, which represents less than 1/2 of 1% of the population, the average annual increase is well within the Least Developed Country definition.

## **SEASONAL WORKERS TO AUSTRALIA**

The Vanuatu Government is continuing to work with the Australian Government on a seasonal worker scheme which would allow Ni-Vanuatu temporary work permits to enter Australia to help with harvesting Australian produce. A very successful similar scheme is now in its second year with New Zealand.

## **WTO MEMBERSHIP**

Vanuatu withdrew its application for WTO membership several years ago, not being satisfied that the benefits of joining exceeded the costs of requirements to open our economy to imported products without import duty. Local manufacturers could not compete, and that meant a loss of local jobs. With the world economy spiraling down, there is renewed pressure from the WTO for Vanuatu to join so the big countries can have access to every possible export market to bolster their economies. They do offer free access to their markets for Vanuatu products—but what does Vanuatu sell that they want to import? For reasons which need clarification, the Vanuatu Government has approved the resumption of talks with the WTO and has allocated VT 5,000,000 for the purpose.

## **2009 BUDGET**

The Minister of Finance has proposed a 2009 Budget which projects a 4.4% growth this year in spite of the world recession, and pledged to spend revenues in a "fully accountable" manner. This rate is down from an average growth rate of 6.0% over the last six years and this year's target is subject to "world conditions". He noted the booming tourism and construction industries but warned they are at risk. Special mention of the benefits of competition in the telecommunication sector were highlighted since the previous monopoly arrangement was terminated. The government had a budget surplus (including grants) of 2% of GDP in 2008 and is targeting a surplus of 0.9% in 2009.

## **EUROPEAN UNION HOLDS REGIONAL MEETING IN VANUATU**

Because of Vanuatu's recognized increased standards of public finance management, the regional EU meeting on public finance management was recently held in Port Vila. The Vanuatu Ministry of Finance is regularly cited to other Pacific island nations as an example of a well run ministry. It has adopted and complies with internationally accepted budget standard and enforcement.